



Home Environmentalist Training

Apply to become an MHE volunteer

Do you care about your health, your family's health, and other peoples' health? Are you concerned about environmental health issues such as exposure to mold, dust, hazardous household chemicals, and other pollutants? Do you talk with friends, relatives, neighbors, and community members about health problems and solutions? Would you like to increase your knowledge about indoor air quality and improve your ability to communicate? If you answered yes to any or all of these questions, you'd probably be a great **Master Home Environmentalist** © (MHE) volunteer!

To enroll in the volunteer training, prospective volunteers must complete an application and go through an interview selection process. Attending the 35 hour training and completing 35 hours of community service are the most important requirements to become an MHE volunteer -- you don't need to be an environmentalist or an expert in anything. We look for diverse individuals who are committed to actively participating in the training sessions and who will volunteer in their communities. We want people who will enjoy working together to improve their own and others' health.

As a **Master Home Environmentalist** © you will recognize hazards such as lead, dust, household chemicals, mold, and other air pollutants; use low cost or no cost methods to reduce risks; teach others about health hazards in their home and how poor air quality can affect their health; and conduct free in-home environmental assessments.

The topics covered in the MHE trainings include: moisture and biological contaminants, dust, lead, toxicology, cultural diversity, secondhand smoke, asthma, household chemicals, ventilation, landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities, and communication and behavior change.

Questions? See *Frequently Asked Questions* for some answers or contact us via email or at (206) 441-5100.

2010 Trainings:

Seattle

- **What:** Free 35 hour **Master Home Environmentalist**© Training
- **When:** September 14th thru November 16th.
- **Where:** The **American Lung Association**® in **Washington's** Seattle office, 2625 Third Avenue
- **How:** If you are interested in next Training, please fill out an application and we will keep it on file.
- **Questions:** For information call (206) 441-5100 or contact us.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What kind of volunteers are you looking for?

Do I have to be a professional in the environmental health or sciences field?

We are looking for residents primarily in the King, Pierce and Yakima County areas who care about having a healthy home and educating others about ways to make their homes healthier. Our volunteers often suffer from asthma, allergies, or chemical sensitivities or have family members or friends who do. The volunteers are interested in learning ways to reduce triggers to these conditions in their homes. To volunteer, you don't have to be a professional in the field, but we do ask that you are willing and able to make the commitment of time to complete both the training and required outreach hours. Our volunteers vary greatly in age and occupation. We are invested in having a culturally diverse group of volunteers participate in the program.

How technical is the training?

This is not a technical training, although it does include some technical elements. Our goal is to give you a basic understanding of indoor pollutants (recognizing the hazards and knowing how they impact our health) and to help you find low cost or no cost solutions to these problems. You don't have to be a scientist, but you do have to be willing to read, study, and actively participate in the training.

Who are the trainers and what are the classes like?

Our trainers are all specialists within their fields who come from a variety of backgrounds. They offer their expertise to our integrated training and are an excellent resource for our volunteers. Each class session is taught by either one or two trainers.

Why do you have the training on weeknights and why are there two Saturday classes?

Because of the number of hours involved in the training we have to include two Saturdays to accommodate two practice walk-throughs of homes. We hold most of the classes in the evenings because we've found that it's more convenient for our volunteers to meet then. This schedule allows those who work or are in school during the day go through the training.

If I can't make this training, when will you have another?

We hold **Master Home Environmentalist** © trainings twice a year - once in the Spring and again in the Fall. If you let us know, we will make sure you are notified of application deadlines.

Will I get university or continuing education credit for the training?

No. Even though the training is comprehensive, we are not able to issue credit for the classes. The goal of our training is to give you the information to do educational outreach to residents, family and friends, and to the general community.

I don't live in King County. Can I join the program?

Preference is given to King County residents because all of the trainings are held in Seattle and most of the outreach work is done in King County. We've found that it's difficult to give outreach support to our volunteers outside of the county because the majority of our resources are in the Seattle area. If you live outside of the county, though, and are willing to make the commitment to come to the trainings and develop an outreach plan for your community, we still encourage you to apply.

What will the training cost?

There is no charge for the training. We require our volunteers to put 35 hours of outreach back into the program over the course of a year in return for the 35 hours of training.

How many people will be selected?

Since the training involves a lot of participation and interaction, the class size is limited to approximately 25 volunteers.

Why do I need to come in for an interview?

We usually receive many more applications than we have space available. A brief interview allows us to meet you, learn more about you, and gives you an opportunity to ask more detailed questions about the program.

What if I can't attend all of the classes?

Because of all the valuable information taught during each class, it's very important that you attend all of the classes. We understand, however, that things come up (prior plans, sickness, etc.) and you may have to miss a class. We do ask that you let us know which class you can't attend and that you have another volunteer take notes for you and collect any hand-outs. We also ask that you write up one page on the topic you missed.

Should I apply if I don't like public speaking?

Our volunteers fulfill their outreach hours in a number of ways that don't necessarily include public speaking. There are many opportunities to educate others without having to speak in front of a large group. Each of our volunteers comes up with an individual outreach plan with our program staff that takes into account what populations they want to reach and how they prefer to work.

What type of volunteer outreach does a trained Master Home Environmentalist © do?

All of our volunteers perform Home Environmental Assessment List (**HEAL™**) visits in the community (each takes about 1 to 1 1/2 hours to complete). During the visit, the volunteer meets with the resident and walks through their home with them, addressing ways that they can reduce their exposure to toxins. They often pair up with other volunteers to do the visits and either come up with their own referrals or take referrals that we get through our office. Volunteers also can get involved in a number of different projects. They may help out at booths for fairs and other community events, do slide show presentations, lead a household hazardous waste workshop, work with a special project targeting childcare providers, or write articles for our volunteer newsletter. We encourage our volunteers to be creative with their outreach ideas and we do what we can to support you so you can be a successful volunteer.

Are there readings and homework for the class?

Yes. We do have a volunteer training manual that you will receive on the first night of training and there are readings that correspond to most of the classes. There are usually a number of hand-outs from each class also. We ask that our volunteers complete two practice **HEALS™** during the course of the training.

What happens after I finish my 35 hours of community outreach?

We hope that you will, like many other trained **Master Home Environmentalists©**, continue with your outreach work. There is no limit to your involvement. If you have any other questions, please call the **American Lung Association® in Washington®** at 206-441-5100.

The information contained in this American Lung Association® in Alaska, Idaho, and Washington web site is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment, and the American Lung Association® in Alaska, Idaho, and Washington recommends consultation with your doctor or health care professional.
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